



# MICHIGAN AFSCME COUNCIL 25

*American Federation of State, County  
and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO*

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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

My name is Nick Ciaramitaro and I am the Director of Legislation and Public Policy for Michigan Council 25 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO. We represent 90,000 people who work in both the public and private sector providing essential public services to your constituents.

AFSCME is greatly concerned about the loss of essential public services – including health services, educational services, roads, law enforcement and so much more. The massive cuts at the state level have generated even larger cuts throughout our communities and are now at the point of causing injury and even death. The reductions in our services have been suffered in the assurance from many in this Legislature that they would result in more jobs for the people of the state of Michigan. After at least six years – and quite frankly more than two decades – that strategy has proven to be a dismal failure. We, therefore, strongly oppose the additional cuts presented to you today.

I want to point out one of those cuts which we believe is particularly detrimental to our security as a society. Executive Order 2007-1 would cut \$12.9 million in funds for childcare and other funding designed to support welfare-to-work parents' ability to work or receive training for work and to provide their children with safe supervision while they are at work or in training.

The proposed 11% cut threatens reliable child care, which has been shown to be the ***single most important factor in parents' ability to gain and keep stable employment.***

Numerous studies and surveys of low-income families have shown that lack of affordable, dependable child care is the single greatest barrier to sustained employment and that child care subsidies promote stable employment. These studies have shown that single mothers who receive child care assistance are 40 percent more likely to still be employed after

two years than those who do not receive any help paying for child care.<sup>1</sup> Another study found that former welfare recipients with young children are 82% more likely to be employed after two years if they receive help paying for child care.<sup>2</sup>

A study published in November 2003 by the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy at the University of Michigan found that "receipt of a childcare subsidy predicts better work outcomes. Among otherwise similar respondents with a child under age 14, those who had a state childcare subsidy at some point ... had on average worked in more months during the past year and also earned more..." Those who had not used care had the poorest work outcomes...among those who used care, those who received a subsidy worked in more of the months ... than those who relied on unsubsidized care....<sup>3</sup>

Michigan is grappling with a child care and protection system that has been weakened to the breaking point. The specific child care cuts proposed worsen an already bad situation. Even the present situation has already resulted in Michigan becoming the site of a school shooting by an elementary school student who lacked safe supervision during his mother's long commute to her two welfare-to-work jobs.

Media accounts describing the shooting death of a 6-year-old girl reported that the tragic victim was a first grader who met her death at the hands of a fellow first grader, ***the youngest school shooter in American history***. The child responsible found his uncle's handgun, took the gun to school and a tragic accident followed. Many asked where his mother was when he left for school that fateful morning. She was being bussed from her neighborhood to work in a mall an hour and a half away in the Detroit suburbs, on state orders, as part of a welfare-to-work program. She didn't see her son take a gun to school because she had to leave home to catch the bus before he got up.

In short, Michigan AFSCME Council 25 opposes, in general, further cuts in essential services thereby creating a danger to our way of life; and opposes these cuts in particular as putting our children – our future – at immediate risk.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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<sup>1</sup> Boushey, H. (2002). *Staying Employed After Welfare: Work Supports and Job Quality Vital to Employment Tenure and Wage Growth*. Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute.

<sup>2</sup> Danziger, S.K. Oltmans Ananat, E. and Browning, K.G. (March 2004). "Childcare Subsidies and the Transition from Welfare to Work. Forthcoming in *Family Relations*, 52(2).

<sup>3</sup> "Childcare Subsidies and the Transition from Welfare to Work," Sandra K. Danziger, Elizabeth Oltmans Ananat, and Kimberly G. Browning, Gerald R. Ford School Of Public Policy, University Of Michigan, November 2003. Using data from The Women's Employment Study (WES), a random sample panel survey of women who received welfare.